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New survey shows diversity of working arrangements

Almost one in five jobholders in May 2000 considered their job to be casual. According to results of a new survey released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), just over 40 percent of these self-identified casuals worked a set number of days each week, and most of them were happy with that arrangement. This survey was designed to fill the need for more comprehensive information about the diversity of working and superannuation arrangements in Australia today.

The report says that over half of all jobholders (55 percent) still work as employees in the 'traditional' sense. That is, they work for an employer, have some paid leave entitlements and are not working on a fixed-term contract. In comparison, almost 20 percent of jobholders were self-identified casuals and 22 percent were owner managers.

Of the 4.8 million 'traditional' employees:

- 86 percent were in full-time jobs;
- 68 percent were satisfied with the number of hours they usually worked a week;
- 13 percent usually worked more than 50 hours a week - of these, 30 percent said they would prefer to work fewer hours;
- 15 percent of those with a full-time job and 24 percent of those with a part-time job said they would prefer to work more hours for more pay;
- nearly three quarters worked a five-day week; and
- 84 percent worked a set number of days each week, fortnight or month, and three quarters of these preferred their current working pattern.

Self-identified casuals are employees (excluding owner managers of incorporated enterprises) who were not entitled to both paid sick leave and paid holiday leave, and who identified themselves as being in a casual job. Of the 1.6 million people in this group:

- many were young - 41 percent were under 25 years old;
- over three quarters of those aged 15 to 19 years were full-time students;
- over 75 percent worked less than 35 hours a week (44 percent worked 15 hours or less a week); and

- almost 40 percent said they would prefer to work more hours for more pay.

Of the 1.9 million jobholders who worked in their own business, that is, as owner managers, 30 percent worked on a contract basis. Over half (54 percent) worked a set number of days each week. Many worked long hours, with 18 percent usually working between 50 and 60 hours a week, and another 18 percent working more than 60 hours a week.

Most 'traditional' employees aged 15 to 54 years (94 percent) said their employer contributed to their superannuation, compared with just 58 percent of self-identified casuals (employers are not obliged to contribute for employees aged under 18 working few hours, and many self-identified casuals are in this category).

Over one third (36 percent) of 'traditional' employees made personal contributions to their superannuation, while only 6 percent of self-identified casuals did so, possibly because of their younger age, their fewer hours worked and their lower earnings. The proportion of individuals making personal superannuation contributions increased with age, from 7 percent of those aged 15-24 years to 39 percent of those aged 45-54 years.

Among jobholders aged 15 to 54 years, the two main reasons people gave for not making personal contributions to superannuation were that they could not afford to (38 percent) or they were not interested or had not thought about it (18 percent).

Details are in the publication **Employment Arrangements and Superannuation, Australia** (cat. no. 6361.0) available from ABS bookshops. The main Features of the publication are available on this site. If you wish to purchase a copy of this publication, contact the **ABS Bookshop** in your capital city.

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